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The Responsibility of Medicine

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DURING the past year I have had the honor of serving as your President and this occasion marks my final appearance before you in an official capacity. I therefore wish to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Association for their loyalty to it and for the almost uniform support and cooperation accorded the program of the Association as ordered by the House of Delegates and carried out by the Council. Had it not been for the loyalty of a great majority of the members of the Association the efforts of the Officers and Council in your behalf would have been greatly impaired.

Service as President or in other official capacity in the California Medical Association is an honor—and a great one, but it is likewise a responsibility. Daily contact with the affairs of medicine and concern about its problems cannot but impress upon the mind of one who seriously undertakes to serve your interests certain items of first importance. It is concerning these that I speak at this time. In so doing I shall be frank. Present circumstances call for plain speaking. This is not the time for equivocation.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF MEDICINE

We, who have devoted our lives to medicine, know of its great achievements in preventing and alleviating human ills. The record of advances in the understanding, diagnosis and treatment of disease is remarkable and gains lustre with each passing year. If one looks back to the beginning of this century he cannot but be astonished at the strides made in this comparatively short period.

To try to enumerate them would be futile but one briefly may call attention to the almost complete mastery of such scourges as typhoid, malaria, yellow fever and plague—the important steps toward the control of tuberculosis, venereal disease, and other communicable diseases—the identification and study

of viruses—the development of radiology from the primitive Roentgen ray to the products of nuclear fission—the development of chemotherapeutic and antibiotic agents—the extension of surgical procedures into fields of therapy and parts of the body previously considered inaccessible.

We have a justifiable and pardonable pride in these accomplishments and in the desire to minister to mankind which motivates most of the profession and which has wrought a tradition of charity toward our fellowmen. We who live medicine, however, may not see it in proper perspective. We may accord it a place of undue importance in the scheme of things. If this be true, and I believe it is, it is not a manifestation of narrow and selfish interests but rather the natural result of our devotion to our profession and to human welfare.

POSITION OF MEDICINE IN SOCIETY

We must recognize that our estimates are not necessarily shared by others and that medicine will never occupy the position in the minds of the public which it does in ours. There are exceptions such as Voltaire who, in his "Philosophical Dictionary" wrote:

"But nothing is more estimable than a physician who, having studied nature from his youth, knows the properties of the human body, the disorders which assail it, the remedies which will benefit it, exercises his art with caution, and pays equal attention to the rich and the poor."

There are other such encomiums but they also express individual points of view.

Medicine, however, does occupy an important place in an integrated society and being a part of it is subject to the stresses and strains of changing environment. In a world as disturbed as the one in which we live those changes may be rapid and violent.

The factors which influence the course of human events are many. Some are accidental, others result from the evolution of ideas and still others are by design. Propaganda may have a temporary impor-

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EDITORIALS

The Laboratory and Diagnosis

One hundred and twenty-five years ago a young man named Laennec was scoffed out of Paris because he dared to say that disease had a basis in anatomical changes. The leader of the French Medical Faculty and so-called philosophical school, Broussais, maintaining that Laennec's views were heretical, stated that all disease was due to a deficiency within the body.

One hundred years later Minot in Boston concluded that pernicious anemia was caused by a deficiency state. However, although this conclusion accorded in this one particular with Broussais' so sweeping doctrine, it had been reached by the avenue suggested by Laennec. Broussais' school of thought was philosophical, augmentative, and clinical, with no positive proof. That espoused by Minot was scientific and its accepted conclusions were backed by scientific proof, for Laennec, although he died young, had left pathology to posterity. The medical world soon recognized that diagnosis and treatment of disease depended upon a knowledge of its appearance in and effect upon organs and tissues.

The bacteriological era was to follow and to be associated with a knowledge of diseased tissue. Soon many acute diseases were to be found due to bacteria, and these discoveries inspired such geniuses as Pasteur and Behring to give us means of prevention and cures for rabies and diphtheria. Serology naturally followed the substantiation of the "germ theory." But years of development of knowledge through pathology, bacteriology and serology still left the world without cures for certain diseases.

Then came chemotherapy and the miracle sulfa drugs which reduced pneumonia from the greatest death dealing disease to a practically innocuous illness. And now comes the antibiotic age with Fleming's penicillin and Waksman's streptomycin to render syphilis, gonorrhea and perhaps even some cases of tuberculosis curable by specific therapy.

Through all this medical progress, roentgenology shines as a great diagnostic and at times therapeutic beacon. We who live in this age of miracle medicine owe gratitude to our medical forebears for their great discoveries making our diagnosis and treatment of disease a far easier task than was theirs. These important discoveries came through the laboratory, pathological, clinical and roentgenological. Insulin was discovered by a clinician and laboratory man, but only after Langerhans and his disciples had done a quarter century's work on the pancreas.

These scientific gentlemen of the past and some of the present were sound clinicians. They knew medicine and used the laboratory as adjuncts to prove a diagnosis, not make one. They believed in careful history taking and physical examination and complete analysis of a patient's condition before receiving laboratory reports. A great clinician once said, "A part of the diagnosis should be made as the patient walks into your office, 75 per cent of it when you have completed your history." Clinicians of the Osler type depended more on their knowledge of disease than upon laboratory findings.

How far have we drifted today from former concepts? Is the modern physician becoming an automaton, permitting the laboratory to direct his entire thinking and make a diagnosis which he accepts blindly? It is to be emphasized that the greatest development in the practice of medicine has been in clinical and roentgenological laboratories. Except in the case of isolated obscure diseases, however, the reports of the laboratory should clinch the diagnosis, not make it. The laboratory is no Aladdin's lamp but merely a guide. During the war many mistakes were made in reports on roentgenological findings which have never been corrected. Every shadow or area of fibrosis in a lung field is not necessarily tuberculosis. City health departments through their social service division have excluded children from

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NOTICES AND REPORTS

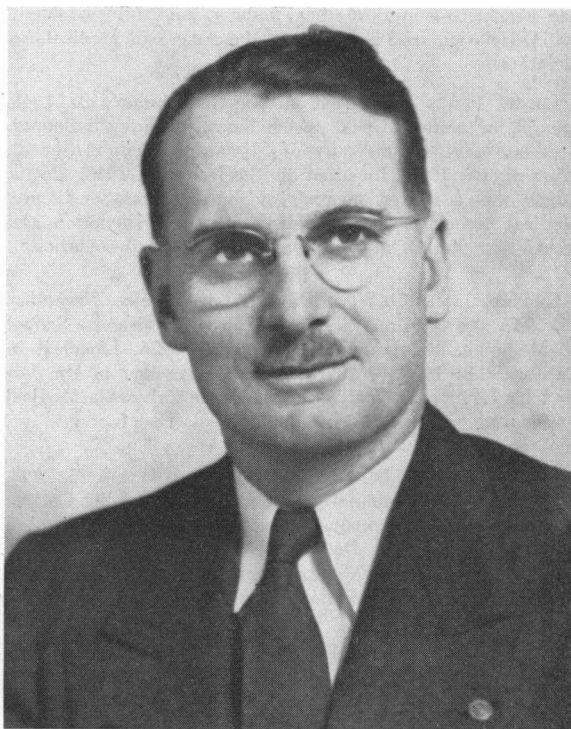
New President-Elect

A man who, even as a newcomer to California 29 years ago, had qualities of leadership that were recognized soon afterward in his election to the House of Delegates of the California Medical Association, last month became President-Elect of the Association. He is Dr. R. Stanley Kneeshaw of San Jose, who has attended every annual session of the C.M.A., except one, since he began practicing in California in 1920 and who has served continuously as a representative of Santa Clara County, either in the House of Delegates or on the C.M.A. Council, since 1921.

Of French Canadian stock, Dr. Kneeshaw was born 57 years ago in Pembina, North Dakota, to parents who had settled there several years before the territory became a state. His father was a lawyer who, at the time of his retirement in his 90th year of life, had served longer as a superior court judge than had any other magistrate in the United States. The new President-Elect's call, however, was to medicine rather than to law—perhaps a genetic reflection that his great great aunt on the distaff side of the escutcheon was Florence Nightingale.

After receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of North Dakota in 1909, Dr. Kneeshaw became a Doctor of Medicine upon graduation from Rush Medical College in Chicago six years later. Following internship at Cincinnati General Hospital, he became associated with the medical staff of the Milwaukee Railroad as resident surgeon in the Washington Boulevard Hospital, Chicago, and later was placed in charge of the railroad's division hospital in St. Moritz, Idaho.

Entering military service in the first World War, he served in charge of a field hospital of the 92nd Division in France. Discharged in 1919 with the rank of major, Dr. Kneeshaw came to California, was licensed as a physician in this state in 1920, and began practicing in San Jose. The confidence in him that has inspired his colleagues to return him year after year to elective office in organized medicine is reflected also in a large general practice, the field in which he has chosen to remain.



R. STANLEY KNEESHAW

Dr. Kneeshaw is a past president of the Santa Clara County Medical Society, and also has served as president of the staff at both the San Jose Hospital and O'Connor Hospital. During the recent war he was a member of the California State Procurement and Assignment Service. He is a member of Sigma Chi and Nu Sigma Nu fraternities, the Kiwanis Club and the United States Chamber of Commerce. He has three daughters and four grandchildren.

For recreation the new President-Elect flies his own plane, hunts, fishes, gives barbecue parties, does a little gardening, plays golf.